

**MINUTES  
CITY OF ST. CHARLES  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING  
RALPH GRATHOFF, CHAIRMAN  
OCTOBER 11, 2018**

**Members Present:** Chairman Ralph Grathoff, Valerie Blaine, Kathy Brens, Heather Goudreau, Lee Haggas, Ray Hauser, Suzi Myers, Loren Nagy, Pam Otto

**Members Absent:** Jon Duerr, Caroline Wilfong

**Others Present:** Chris Adesso, AJ Reineking

**Visitors Present:** Isabella Bernat, William Koehl

**1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was convened by Chair. Grathoff at 7:04 p.m.

**2. Introduction of Visitors, Comments and Concerns**

High school student Isabella Bernat introduced herself to all present, and expressed her interest in observing the meeting and joining the Natural Resources Commission [NRC] as a student member.

William Koehl introduced himself as a representative of the Central Kane County League of Women Voters [LWV], which recently started an environmental team. Mr. Koehl was present to observe the NRC meeting and offer the League's assistance to the Commission.

**3. Minutes Review and Approval**

Motion to approve and place into the public record the minutes of the September 13, 2018 Natural Resources Commission meeting. Motion by Comm. Myers, second by Comm. Brens to approve the minutes. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:05 p.m.

**4. Old Business**

**A. Storm Drain Markers**

Mr. Reineking reported on his cost research for different materials such as plastic, aluminum, stainless steel and brass. Prices range from \$225 to \$875 for quantities of 100 markers. Plastic is more costly than aluminum. The markers are applied with adhesive. Comm. Otto asked if there may be a budget for the markers next fiscal year. Mr. Adesso stated the City's next fiscal year begins on May 1, 2019, and explained the NRC could develop a proposed program for the markers including how many would be installed and how the markers would be installed [i.e. if volunteers would participate]. The proposal could be recommended to and presented to the City's Government Services Committee for approval and justification as expenditure in the City's budget. Comm. Brens suggested an "adopt-a-storm drain" program might be possible. Comm. Brens explained a resident or family could adopt a block of storm drains, pay for and install the markers and then receive recognition at a City Council meeting and receive a certificate, for example. Comm. Nagy noted storm drain markers could be an Eagle Scout project. High school students may also be interested in participating to earn volunteer service hours.

Chair. Grathoff inquired as to the number of storm drains in the City that are not cast and would need a marker installed. Mr. Reineking explained the City's GIS [Geographic Information Systems] could identify the location of all storm drains in St. Charles, but could

not differentiate between cast and uncast drains. Comm. Otto suggested identifying cast versus uncast drains could also be a volunteer opportunity. Comm. Myers asked if the City had a diagram showing exactly where storm drains terminate, and Mr. Adesso suggested there should be graphics available on the internet. The goal of starting installation in Spring 2019 and completing 100 drains by July 2019 was discussed. Markers are under consideration with the wording “Only Rain in the Drain.”

Chair. Grathoff summarized: at the next meeting the NRC will select the type of marker to be installed, he will write an outline of the proposal, including how many markers will be installed. The proposal should be completed for the January 2019 Government Services Committee meeting.

**B. Plans Submitted to City for Retention Pond**

Mr. Reineking reported he had spoken to the City’s Community and Economic Development Department Manager and had reviewed the plans for the new development in the outlots by the Meijer store. The retention ponds are all private. As part of the development there will be cosmetic improvements such as trimming larger trees and removing certain shrubs to increase visibility. The plans do not address the reeds or the invasive species around the ponds. Mr. Adesso explained the retention ponds were constructed prior to the Kane County ordinance requiring naturalized retention areas. While the current county ordinance requires naturalized retention areas, it does not provide for vegetation maintenance.

Utilizing the City’s Community Rating System [CRS], all retention ponds, including private ponds, are inspected annually by the City mainly for structural issues, including shoreline erosion and overflow installation. There are no continuing performance standards for vegetation. Comm. Otto inquired as to the original plans for the retention ponds at the Meijer site. Mr. Adesso and Mr. Reineking will follow up with the City’s Community and Economic Development Department on this issue. Mr. Adesso noted the City has its own performance standards for City-owned basins.

**C. Urban Forestry Management Plan**

Updates in progress.

**5.**

**New Business**

**A. Potential Natural Resources Commission High School Student Members**

Comm. Goudreau informed the Commission on behalf of high school student Chloe Fanning, that although she has other academic-related commitments on Thursday evenings, she is interested in becoming involved with the NRC. Comm. Nagy suggested that Ms. Fanning be encouraged to attend NRC meetings as a visitor as her schedule allows, and join the Commission at a later date.

Chair. Grathoff reviewed City Code pertaining to non-voting student members of the NRC [Sec. 3, 12.20.040 Natural Resources Commission, establishment, composition, appointment of members], and asked Ms. Bernat about her interest in the NRC. Ms. Bernat expressed her interest in the Commission based on the inter-connection of the social and science aspects of the NRC’s mission.

Motion to nominate Ms. Bernat as a student member of the NRC. Motion by Comm. Brens, second by Comm. Nagy to nominate Ms. Bernat. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:34 p.m. Chair. Grathoff welcomed Ms. Bernat to the Commission.

**B. Oak Trees in Langum Park**

Comm. Nagy reported he had noticed distressed trees in Langum Park and subsequently did a field test for Oak wilt, but found none. He took a tree sample to a board certified arborist and then to a plant pathologist, who conducted a field visit. The Oak tree(s) were found to be nutrient deficient, which was caused by an infestation of the two-lined Chestnut borer. Comm. Nagy explained the tree(s) will likely die by June 2019. He suggested treating the Oak trees to help them recover from the pest damage, plan for reforestation and mulch all the trees in the park. Mr. Craft and Comm. Nagy will schedule a time to meet at Langum Park to review the trees.

**C. Monarch Butterflies**

Comm. Hauser reported between 1999 and 2012 the monarch butterfly population declined 88%. The butterflies are not endangered, but may be placed on a watch list. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Chicago Academy Sciences, among other organizations have monarch programs. Additionally, Monarch Watch is an organization that promotes research, educational outreach and advocacy; they offer monarch targeting kits and also sell milkweed. Comm. Blaine concurred on the importance of monarch butterflies as a symbol of native pollinators; there is regional and national concern for this issue. Comm. Blaine explained the Kane County Forest Preserve District is involved in promoting pollinator habitats and is part of the monarch corridor grant. The Forest Preserve received funds to coordinate monarch paths, which include forest preserves in St. Charles, and milkweed plants are given away at their June “monarchs and milkweed” festival.

Comm. Goudreau noted a prospective NRC high school student member, was involved in raising butterflies at home for release. Prior to release a small numbered sticker was carefully placed on each butterfly’s wings then the numbers on the stickers were registered on a website. When the butterflies migrated to Mexico the tagged butterflies were tracked, located and the migration information was entered on the website.

Comm. Hauser suggested educating and involving residents in the support of monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Comm. Goudreau will post information on the NRC Facebook page.

**6. Committee Reports**

**A. Education Committee**

Comm. Myers stated she plans to educate residents about the storm drain initiative.

Chair. Grathoff thanked Comm. Myers for the donation and distribution of the book, *The Survivor Tree*, to the schools in St. Charles.

**B. Langum Woods Clean-Up Committee**

Nothing to report at this time.

**7. Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports August and September 2018**

Motion by Comm. Nagy to approve the Public Services Division Tree Activity Reports and place into the public record, second by Comm. Brens. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 7:59 p.m.

**8. Additional Items**

**A. Commissioners**

Student Comm. Bernat expressed her appreciation on becoming a member of the NRC. She noted she is the president of her high school science honor society, and if any there are any

NRC projects that need volunteers, she can coordinate up to 120 members of the honor society to participate.

Comm. Goudreau reported she had recently toured a food scrap composting facility in Romeoville run by Waste Management. Comm. Goudreau is interested in having St. Charles participate in a food scrap composting program. A video on this topic was posted on the NRC Facebook page. Comm. Goudreau also reported the “Pumpkin Smash” pumpkin composting flyer for the NRC’s November 3rd event is ready for distribution. The flyer will be posted throughout St. Charles where pumpkins are sold. Additionally, a business card size version of the flyer will be created by Comm. Goudreau to hand out with candy during treat-or-treating.

Comm. Otto noted the annual America in Bloom Symposium will be held in St. Charles from October 3rd to 5th, 2019.

Comm. Nagy noted the Impact Conference, Building Sustainable Landscapes will be held this weekend at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

**B. City Staff**

None.

**C. Visitors**

Mr. Koehl, on behalf of LWV, reported they are considering an initiative and potential partners [such as the NRC] to promote a ban on coal tar driveway sealants. Coal tar driveway sealants are no longer sold by retailers and have been banned by some communities in favor of less destructive sealants. Mr. Koehl explained that coal tar sealants become pulverized and turn to dust which is then airborne, tracked into homes, washed into rivers, etc.

Mr. Koehl inquired as to the NRC’s interest in obtaining GRC2 certification [Greenest Region Compact 2]. The LWV would like to encourage communities in the area to pursue this certification and noted Batavia and Geneva are involved obtaining GRC2 certifications. Mr. Adesso noted St. Charles was one of the original members of the GRC but has not pursued the next phase of the process; perhaps this would be of interest to the NRC.

Mr. Koehl noted both Batavia and Geneva are participating in food scrap composting, and encouraged St Charles to join this program. He explained that food scraps in landfills are a large contributor to climate change.

**9. Adjournment OK OK**

Motion by Comm. Myers to adjourn the meeting, second by Comm. Nagy. Voice vote: unanimous; nays – none. Motion carried at 8:13 p.m.